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From The Land of David

(It is very doubtful if any other newspaper in Ohio can boast of a subscriber so far removed from the place of publication as can the Sentinel. A great many newspapers, the Sentinel included, have subscribers in every state in the Union, but few send any papers abroad, and rare indeed is the American newspaper that finds its way to far-off Syria. For the past year a copy of the Sentinel has been sent weekly to a Medina man in Syria, Mr. Millard F. Fuller, son of Mr. and Mrs. N. E. Fuller of Spencer, who is a teacher of botany and pharmacognosy in the American college at Beirut. Mr. Fuller is 21 years old, and graduated from Oberlin College in 1920. Through arrangement with Mr. Fuller's family the Sentinel has obtained permission to publish an extended account of Mr. Fuller's trip to Syria, his impressions of the many wonderful and historic sights he has beheld, and a description of the people and conditions of the country in which he is located. Mr. Fuller possesses a vivid power of description, and the Sentinel believes that his contribution to the columns of this paper will be found by the readers to be unusually interesting as well as instructive. The letters begin with this issue and will be continued weekly until ended.—Editor.)

American College of Beirut,
Beirut, Syria
October 23, 1920

Dear Mother and All:

This certainly is a wonderful place. My expectations have been more than realized. I surely am glad that had so much "preliminary training" in Italy and Egypt, for had I been picked up in the United States and dropped down here in Syria, I would have said, like the old man who for the first time saw a giraffe at the circus, "There ain't no such animal." But after having seen so many wonderful things, I am now prepared for most anything.

The trip over was a veritable trip through Fairyland, winged by the "Magic Shekel," not the carpet. The greater part of this letter will be devoted to this so-called "preliminary training." It will be rather lengthy, I fear, but I hope it does not prove tiresome.

My time so far has been rather fully taken up, both pedagogically and socially, for one must live up to one's social position. That of "staff" is

being a parasite upon the hospitality of the permanent faculty members, a duty both satisfying and gratifying. Sunday afternoon the faculty members and staffs leave tea together. This is a specialty—I mean we have different things to eat than then we have at our other meals. We send this meal happily down our alimentary canal to rest with the olive oil smeared, the soft and the fried food of native Syrian cooking. No, I am not complaining about the food, but I am not accustomed to it yet.

Perhaps the first thing you would like to ask me is "What do you miss most?" I waver between salted butter and twilights, for we have no twilights here. But there is no twilight the sunsets are beautiful. Ohio sunsets never have the wonderful colors that these sunsets do. Another thing I miss is grass. It is so hot here in the summer time that grass does not grow at all. However, I think I shall decide to answer your question by saying that the thing I miss most is hot water. Nothing could be more acceptable.

Everything is done backwards here. We put our overcoats on when we come in instead of when we go out. I now know what that expression "In the shade of the mighty Rock" means. I surely can sympathize with Jonah when his gourd house withered.

This is a queer country—Sunny Syria where one roasts in the sun and freezes in the shade especially if there is a little breeze. It gets quite cold in one's room, so cold in fact that we have to keep a little oil stove burning most of the time in order to keep comfortable.

Yesterday morning I watched the sun rise over the Lebanon mountains. First all was rosy red and then, as the sun came up higher, bright and dazzling white from the snow. There is first a low near range of mountains and back of that a higher range. The second is not merely snow-capped it is covered with snow and makes a very beautiful sight when the sun comes up from behind.

I have played tennis several times and go swimming nearly every day in the Mediterranean Sea. So long as one stays in the sun, it is very warm.

And now while it is fresh in my mind, I will tell you about my trip over.

There were twenty of us on the ship who were coming to Beirut. As there were only 35 other first class passengers, we had things about our own way. Among our number was Mrs. H. S. Bliss, wife of the late president of the Syrian Protestant College. Mr. Bliss attended the Peace Conference in Paris in behalf of the Syrian people.

The first land we saw after we left New York was the Azores Islands. When I awoke on the morning of September 6 I saw from the port-hole a cloud-like mountainous bit of land which at our distance seemed three or four miles long. At first I considered it a cloud, but later found it to be one of the Azores. It was 38 miles to the north. These islands are very mountainous. About 11 a. m. that day we saw San Miguel, or St. Michael, about 60 miles away. The mountains are all of volcanic origin. Consequently as the altitude of the peaks is about 3000 to 3500 feet and the largest only 40 to 50 miles long and about 10 or 12 miles wide, we could see some of the cities very distinctly.

One of the girls said the cities looked like washings hung out on the line, for nearly all the buildings are painted white, pink, gray, light green, etc. Wouldn't living in a lavender house be romantic? The hills are terraced in many places and the fields are laid out in four sided, often rectangular shapes with hedges between them. You can't imagine how pretty these hedged off fields were, when one could stand off on board ship several miles away and get a panoramic view over several miles of territory. Some of the hills were wooded and on the tops of some were many windmills of the Dutch variety.

We sailed very close to Ponta Delgada, but could not land as the harbor was too small for our ship. We remained in the harbor about two hours and during this time I saw several Fords go down the city streets. Some of them were painted light colors while others retained the color they had brought from Detroit and so looked quite prosaic and out of place in this gaily light colored city.

On board the Canopic were two first class and about 100 second class passengers for these islands. Miss Smith from Washington, D. C., came out to visit the American Consul and his wife and was met on board by them. It looked fine to see the Consul's motor launch with its American flag streaming out over the water. The Consul's party came on board just after the Portuguese officials came on for our shipping papers and to unwind the necessary red tape. We also had a small cargo to land here.

We were met by a round of small boats with things to sell. These vendors are compelled to be honest for they each carry permits from the Portuguese Government. The vendors brought their boats to the ship's side and threw up a coiled rope which one let down to receive a basket. In this basket one places their money and receives their desired merchandise. Pay first is their motto and I guess one can not blame them. They had for sale nuts, delicious pineapples, tomatoes, canaries, fancy work, melon seed purses, etc.

Another interesting thing I saw was their prison, a large three story building with small windows. In front of this larger building and right on the water's edge is a small white building. Underneath are two life prisoners one of whom has been there six years. Twice every day the tide comes in and the water rises in their prison until it reaches their chests, then it goes down again. A pleasant outlook for life, don't you think?

It was just dusk as we left the harbor and for some time we could see the lights of the cities along the shore. By the next morning the Azores were far behind out of sight and we looked forward to seeing Gibraltar.

We saw a great many porpoises along the way. They often jumped

up out of the water very close to the ship. We saw a great many fishing boats just out of the harbor of Gibraltar and some of the old sail boats with their triangular sails which are many on the Mediterranean and are the same as were used in Bible times.

As we passed the pillars of Hercules we could see the mountains of Spain and those of Morocco, Africa, at the same time—a wonderfully beautiful sight.

We arrived in the harbor of Naples—that beautiful day with which none other can compare (so sayeth those who are supposed to know) on the evening of September 13. The next morning we landed about nine o'clock from about six in the morning our ship had been surrounded by vendors boats, boats of serenaders and dancing girls—all after the almighty American CENT. When we reached the dock a sordid scene awaited us. There we saw our first Italian beggar. Half-dressed, twisted, contorted, blind, lame, dirty, miserable, pitiful, weeping, earless, noseless wretches. In fact we have seen most every kind of "less" beggars but headless. Both women and children were there. We had been warned not to heed them so passed them by quickly.

We went directly to the Customs House where we stayed from 10:30 until after 3. During that time one suit case, one mandolin case and two trunks were all that were opened. None of these were mine and they did not even ask me "No tobacco, no sugar, no salt, no coffee, no tea, no coca?" These are the taxable things at present that one could carry in a trunk or bag. Italians coming back to Italy to live are given a thorough searching, but we being only travelers were let off easily.

While spending those delightful hours there waiting I spied calmly sitting on his trunk awaiting his turn, Dr. Wagar of Oberlin, a professor who is going to spend the winter, after a little travel, in Palermo, Italy.

After leaving the Customs House we went to the Hotel de Londres in a taxi. Taxis in Naples are carriages, mostly one horse, slightly crowded for three. The front wheels are about 2 feet high and the back ones about 4 feet. The fare for three persons and five suitcases was 5 lire—distance about three-quarters of a mile—not quite 25 cents according to the present rate of exchange. One can exchange \$10.00 for 228 lire; one-half cent mails a letter to the United States. Taxi fares advanced 100 per cent, last spring. What were they before?

Our hotel prices were 28 lire per day—room, supper, breakfast and 10 per cent, for tips, which goes on all bills in Europe. The way these people bow over a tip of 20 centimes (1 cent) makes it worth while to give one. The servile bowing of the servants is amusing. One of our fellows gave a porter 4 lire (20 cents) to carry his suitcases up 5 flights of stairs. This proved to be over a day's wage for the man.

At dinner at this hotel, we saw some Italian men and women eating spaghetti in true Italian fashion. We had some funny things for dinner which none of us could name. Round things like suckers on them. After we had had them for two or three days we found out that they were octopuses (or Octupi), the young ones of those horrible creatures which mythically suck down human prey. We saw a great many of them in the harbor.

A guide had showed us where the city park was, so that evening a few of us hied us forth to the Villa Nazionale or the La Villa. It lies between two board streets one of which is a regular boulevard that runs along the sea. The park must be about three-quarters of a mile long and a good block wide.

Beautiful curved walks and near one side great wide thoroughfares. A marvellous wealth of tropical plants abound, bananas, palms of all kinds, eucalyptis, fig, etc., in great profusion. Among these trees are placed marvellous sculptures and monuments, all rather modern—since 1700. We then strolled back to our hotel. Thus ended our first day in Italia, Italia Beloved.

The next morning thirteen of us started out with a guide in a Fiat and a Spa for Pompeii. Traffic in Naples is supposed by city ordinance to turn to the right, but nothing except street cars would think of keeping to the right. Everything else goes everywhere it gets a chance. Then consider our sensations as we go spinning along about 40 miles an hour towards donkey carts, mule carts, horses and funny wagons, ox-carts, carriages of all kinds, etc. There are few side-walks east of New York so all the people walk in the street. Such a scatteration as we produced—everybody yelled. Some streets were so narrow that people had to flatten themselves against house walls when we met an ox-cart or something. Some thriller of a ride.

(To be Continued)

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